

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 997

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0338

EXDIS

FOR NEA/ARN

EO 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PFOR, IZ

SUBJECT: (1) MADAM SADDAM HUSSEIN VISIT (2) US-IRAQI RELATIONS

1. MISS BAKR, WHO IS USINT'S PRINCIPAL CONTACT AT FOREIGN MINISTRY, CALLED ME IN THREE DAYS IN A ROW BEGINNING MAY 26 TO DISCUSS: VISIT OF VICE PRESIDENT AND BA'ATH PARTY CHAIRMAN SADDAM HUSSEIN'S WIFE TO U.S. FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT; AND US-IRAQI RELATIONS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO KURDISH PROBLEM AND ARAB-ISRAEL PROBLEM.

2. REGARDING MADAM HUSSEIN'S VISIT, MISS BAKR SAID SHE HAS AN APPOINTMENT JUNE 14 WITH DR. FRANK FURSTENBERG AT THE ALLERGY CLINIC OF JOHNS HOPKINS MEDICAL CENTER. MADAM HUSSEIN IS TRAVELLING ON A DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT UNDER NAME SAJIDA KHAIRI. SHE WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY THREE AND POSSIBLY FOUR PEOPLE INCLUDING HER PERSONAL PHYSICIAN. WE HAVE ISSUED B-2 DIPLOMATIC VISAS TO THIS PARTY (SEE BAGHDAD 335). MISS BAKR REQUESTS THIS INFORMATION BE CLOSELY HELD AND PARTICULARLY NOT DISCUSSED AT THIS TIME WITH IRAQI INTERESTS SECTION IN WASHINGTON. I AGREED TO THIS AND ASKED WHETHER WE COULD BE OF ANY ASSISTANCE TO MADAM HUSSEIN. MISS BAKR SAID SHE WILL INFORM ME WHEN PRECISE SCHEDULE FIRM. AT THAT TIME IRAQ INTERESTS SECTION WASHINGTON WILL BE INFORMED, AND GOI WOULD LIKE DEPARTMENT COORDINATE ARRANGEMENTS WITH IRAQ INTERESTS SECTION FOR MEETING MADAM HUSSEIN AND FACILITATING HER MEDICAL TREATMENT. MISS BAKR SAID GOI IS CONCERNED ABOUT MADAM HUSSEIN'S SECURITY. I SAID I FELT SURE U.S. WOULD TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS TO MAKE MADAM HUSSEIN'S VISIT SUCCESSFUL, AND PROMISED MISS
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BAKR I WOULD INFORM DEPARTMENT IMMEDIATELY WHEN SHE CONFIRMED

MADAM HUSSEIN'S PLANS. COMMENT: BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL MAKE SPECIAL EFFORT TO SEE THAT VISIT GOES SMOOTHLY. GOI REQUESTS SEEM REASONABLE AND I HOPE WE CAN RESPOND.

3. REGARDING U.S.-IRAQ RELATIONS, MISS BAKR'S REMARKS WERE LARGELY READ FROM A PREPARED POSITION PAPER. SHE SAID GOI HAD BEEN VERY PLEASED TO HEAR THAT HIGH-LEVEL DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS HAD REFUSED TO RECEIVE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE KURDISH REBELS. GOI HAD HEARD THAT KURDS HAD THEN GONE TO CONGRESS BUT GOI CONTINUED TO BE REASSURED THAT DEPARTMENT'S HANDLING OF KURDS REFLECTED USG POSITION. MISS BAKR SAID GOI DOUBTS ABOUT U.S. POSITION ON KURDS AND U.S. POSITION ON ARAB-ISRAEL QUESTION HAVE BEEN ONLY OBSTACLES IN IRAQI EYES TO RESUMPTION DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. ON KURDISH PROBLEM, GOI FELT U.S. WAS IN POSITION TO PREVAIL UPON IRAN TO CEASE GIVING AID TO KURDISH REBELS, BUT NONETHELESS, SHE REITERATED, GOI MOST GRATIFIED BY DEPARTMENT'S ACTION. SHE DID NOT MENTION POSSIBLE KURDISH REPRESENTATIONS AT UN. REGARDING ARAB-ISRAEL PROBLEM, SHE SAID IRAQ'S POSITION WELL KNOWN TO U.S. BUT THAT IN DIPLOMACY "ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE"-- CITING RECENT IRAQI RESUMPTION RELATIONS WITH UK AND WEST GERMANY. I ASKED WHETHER SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION US-ENGINEERED AGREEMENT BETWEEN SYRIA AND ISRAEL WOULD CHANGE GOI POSITION, BUT MISS BAKR SAID SHE NOT AUTHORIZED GO BEYOND WHAT SHE HAD SAID AND FURTHERMORE THAT SHE DID NOT WISH SPECULATE PERSONALLY ON WHAT GOI REACTION WILL BE TO SYRIAN-ISRAEL ACCORD.

4. REGARDING KURDISH QUESTION, I REITERATED U.S. POSITION THAT IT WAS AN INTERNAL MATTER AND ONE WHICH WE HOPED IRAQ COULD SOLVE PEACEFULLY. I DID NOT RESPOND TO HER COMMENT ON POSSIBILITY U.S. PERSUADING IRAN TO STOP AID TO KURDS.

5. REGARDING ARAB-ISRAEL QUESTION, I SAID DR. KISSINGER HAD PERFORMED AN EXTRAORDINARY ACT OF DIPLOMACY WHICH SHOULD BE APPLAUDED BY ARABS AS MOST CONSTRUCTIVE DEVELOPMENT IN WHOLE HISTORY OF ARAB-ISRAEL CONFLICT AND SHOULD FORESHADOW A NEW ERA OF PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE U.S. THROUGHOUT THE ARAB WORLD. AS FOR IRAQ, I SAID OUR POSITION REMAINED THAT WE PREPARED AT ANYTIME DISCUSS RESUMPTION RELATIONS. MISS BAKR AGAIN SAID SHE NOT AUTHORIZED TO COMMENT.

6. COMMENT: MY LOCAL STAFF TELLS ME THERE ARE MANY RUMORS ABOUT
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THAT HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE BEING CONDUCTED BETWEEN U.S. AND IRAQ OUTSIDE OF IRAQ WILL RESULT IN REOPENING EMBASSY HERE. THESE SEEM THE TYPICAL BAGHDAD RUMORS I REMEMBER FROM MY PREVIOUS ASSIGNMENT BUT MISS BAKR'S APPROACH COULD BE AT LEAST THE BEGINNING OF A SIGNAL THAT IRAQIS WANT TO RESUME RELATIONS.

7. I WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING INSTRUCTION FOR RESPONDING TO FUTURE APPROACHES OF THIS NATURE OR TO A CLEAR PROPOSAL THAT

WE RESUME. SPECIFICALLY, I SHOULD HAVE IN HAND U.S. POSITION
ON CONFISCATION EMBASSY PROPERTY AND ANY OTHER SERIOUS OUTSTANDING
ISSUES BETWEEN U.S. AND IRAQ.
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